



5-Year Plan (2010 to 2015)

Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

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Organization of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

A political subdivision of the State of Washington – authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

Function of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

We Serve & Why

- *The people of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District cooperators, private land owners, land managers, students, and public city, county, state, and federal entities about issues impacting them regarding continued protection and enhancement of the natural resources in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District.*

Mission of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

To assist the cooperators of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District, to maximize sustainable productivity, to increase their income, while conserving and enhancing natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans) for now and future generations by making available federal, state, county, city, and private programs, resources, technical and scientific information, and educational opportunities.

Vision of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

- *Changing values and priorities has raised the public's interest in "conservation commodities". Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District will assist our cooperators in providing the public with clean air, clean water, wildlife diversity, recreational, educational, and renewable energy opportunities.*

Values of the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

We Believe in:

- *Protecting and improving natural resources of soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans*
- *Maintaining and/or improving income for the cooperators of Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District*
- *Sustainable agriculture for both resources and economics.*
- *Improving the resources for future generations*
- *High moral integrity in the management of information, money, and technical assistance provided to our cooperators*
- *Providing our services without bias or prejudice*
- *Education is fundamental*
- *Respecting the rights of our cooperators*
- *Expanding new technology*

Natural Resource Priorities (in Priority Order) and Goals:

- *1. Soil*
- *2. Water*
- *3. Air*

First Priority: Soil

Soil Erosion –

Goals: By the year 2015:

- Direct seeding will be increased from the current estimate of 12% to 50% of the cropland acres
- Increase acres of contour grass buffer strips from the current of approx 40% up to 50%
- Increase documentation of soil loss reduction that is being achieved
- Develop plantings for protection of soil and for wildlife habitat

Soil quality –

Goals: By the year 2015:

- Increase the documentation of proper pest and nutrient management
- Document the number of producers that are adopting precision agriculture
- Develop an educational strategy to help change producer attitudes towards direct seeding

Second Priority: Water**Water Quality and Quantity -**

Goals: By the year 2015

- Increase acres of riparian buffer strips from 15% to 50%, of the eligible riparian acres, to help move cattle in riparian feeding areas away from the streams and rivers
- Increase documentation of water quality and quantity improvements that are achieved
- Have 95% of all identified AFO/CAFO issues resolved by 2015
- 80% of the cattle will be located in feeding areas away from the streams and rivers
- Plans that treat water quality will be completed and 50% of the cooperators will be in compliance with water quality standards for nutrients and sedimentation
- Enhance off-site watering facilities for livestock and wildlife

Third Priority: Air

Goals: By the year 2015:

- Work with DOE on the reduction and management of burning through continued permitting and information dissemination
- Continue to work with DOE on education about reduction of wind erosion
- By 2015 increase education and the use of wind or solar energy
- Increase education and the use of biofuels
- Increase use of cover crops to reduce feedlot wind erosion, particularly after livestock are moved to grazing fields

Critical Geographic Areas:

- West half of PRLCD – (16" and below rainfall area) Dryland area of district has more concerns with cultural resources
- All watersheds have issues with soil erosion, AFO/CAFO, & vegetation enhancement & air quality
- Rural Communities have environmental issues with groundwater contamination

Information – Education Priorities and Goals:

Goals: By the year 2015:

- Have maintained a continuous conservation education program in the local school systems
- Increase grower education activities to reach 70% of the growers in the District leading to an increase in conservation activity by 20%
- Increase communication with all landowners in the district
- Have maintained an active Web Site
- Have developed a list of cooperator's contact information

Specific Educational Activities:

- Put out a quality (slick) written educational pamphlet – four times a year on topics of a technical nature gathered from existing research and information that is pertinent and valued by our cooperators
- Educational annual meetings, workshops, demonstration days, tours, and a day in the district for elected officials
- Host a citizen's meeting – Community
- Tree plantings with Junior High students
- Continue Envirothon effort
- Work with the ag advisors at schools on conservation education programs - provide guest speakers and presentations
- Soil stewardship materials distribution
- Coordinate with NRCS on presentations
- Consider a sub-committee on conservation education
- Work with NRCS to hold a direct seed tour.
- For Soil Erosion Distribute info on Managing contour grass buffer strips (eyebrows)

District Operations Priorities, Goals:

Goals: By the year 2015:

- Increase staffing and services to provide the programs needed by cooperators by using contracted services, using agency personnel assistance, and partnerships with other conservation district positions
- Seek FSA Certification of nonfederal employees to increase implementation of USDA programs
- Increase utilization of partnerships with NRCS, WDFW and FSA
- Train staff in the latest applications of software and increase their computer skills in order to increase efficiency

Trends Impacting Conservation in the Palouse Rock-Lake Conservation District

- Farm Economy – losing our neighbors on the farm and communities – low commodity prices and high costs of operation
- Money is getting tight in the farm economy – looking for alternatives for getting income off the land
- Ecology has become more and more regulatory in PRLCD on livestock issues and cropland issues, etc.
- EPA and Ecology mandates increasing – clean water and clean air
- Economic hardships continue too increase for farmers, ag businesses, etc.
- Uncertainty and changes in ag programs
- Direction of funding opportunities – tougher to get
- The utilization of the riparian programs will benefit producers as well as habitat
- Increasing interest in AFO and CAFO by Ecology- Cost of production is increasing while the interest in ecological conditions are increasing at the same time – measurements are getting tighter and tighter – RUSLE II, STIR factor (determining direct seed/mulch till), and PM 2.5 or PM 10

Strategies to Address Trends

- Set up a clearing- house for all the grants, technical assistance, funding etc – farmers could come to the district for a direct lead for services and programs regarding conservation planning and practice application. Coordinating all the agencies in one place leads to efficiency
- Enhance technical assistance to cooperators – keep them abreast of continuing opportunities to stay in business and meeting requirements for rules and regulations – help our cooperators walk through the processes
- To assist cooperators applying conservation practices through technical assistance, information and funding
- Base funding on resource concerns rather than on the most available grant - be leaders in program funding - not followers

Natural Resource Data:

Background

Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD) has been serving the needs of the local farmers and citizens since its beginning on September 11, 1942.

The Palouse-Rock Lake CD is unique in that it is one of four districts serving the citizens of Whitman County. There are 1,397,560 acres in Whitman County with a total of 378,701 acres located in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District. Towns located in Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District include St. John (population 518), Ewan (population 36), Endicott (population 350), and Lamont (population 94).

Rainfall in the area ranges from 14 to 18 inches per year. Rivers, Creeks and Streams and lakes located within the district boundaries are the Palouse River, Rock Creek, Rock Lake, Pleasant Valley Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Imbler Creek, Packer Creek, Lower Downing Creek, Negro Creek and Little Valley Creek.

Staffing Needs

- 1 FTE Office Manager (Secretary/Bookkeeper)
- 1 FTE District Coordinator – full-time (tree plantings, TSP, grant writing, Farm Plans)
- 1 PTE Soils Lab Tech / Janitor (part time)
- 1 FTE Field Technician
- 1 PTE student or Americorp person to assist office manager
- 1 plus - PTE to assist with field work-contract (Contract or part time employees)

Annual Budget Needs

Expenses:

Employee Wages & Benefits	\$ 169,200.00
Supplies	\$ 25,000.00
Health Benefits	\$ 20,000.00
Professional Services	\$ 30,000.00
Retirement	\$ 8,750
Cultural Review	\$ 2,500.00
Communication	\$ 3,200.00
Matting Contract	\$ 18,000.00
Travel	\$ 9,000.00
Planting	\$ 18,000.00
Advertising	\$ 2,100.00
Direct Seed Cost Share	\$ 60,000.00
Monitoring	\$ 14,400.00
Insurance	\$ 3,800.00
Utilities	\$ 4,500.00
Dues	\$ 3,800.00
Maintenance	\$ 5,000.00
Fuel	\$ 2,500.00
Trees	\$ 34,000.00
Taxes	\$ 2,525.00
Burn Permits (DOE)	\$ 10,000.00
Equipment	\$ 5,000.00
Cost Share	\$ 40,000.00
Fence Cost	\$ 80,000.00
Training	\$ 4,000.00

Key Decision Makers

- Conservation District Supervisors and Employees

- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Whitman County Commissioners
- State Legislatures
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (all levels)
- Farm Service Agency (all levels)
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington Association of Conservation Districts
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- United States Department of Agriculture Secretary (Mutual Agreement)
- Governor of Washington State (Mutual Agreement)
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
- WA state parks and recreation.

Priority Actions – 12 Months

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Measurable Goal:

Benchmark	Timeline	12 Month Actions
Direct Seed	4/10- 10/10	Enroll 12 cooperators into the direct seed cost share program
Direct Seed Outreach	4/10-3/11	Through education and mentoring increase direct seeded acreage in the district by 5,000 acres
Riparian Buffer	4/10-3-11	Write conservation plans for 10 miles for the riparian buffer program and assist them to contract with FSA
Direct Seed Tours and Demonstrations	6 /10- 10/10	Conduct two direct seed tours to educate cooperators on the benefits of direct seed
Conservation Education	4/10-10/10	Partner with other conservation districts in Whitman County to enhance student education through the Envirothon and Soil Judging Contests
Tree Enhancement Program	4-10-3-11	Increase opportunities for the general public to purchase trees for upland areas
CRP Take Out Options	4-10-3-11	Disseminate information on potential CRP Take Out Options. Form committees with Extension, NRCS, Cattlemen Assoc, PNDSA, and Districts along with other entities for haying, grazing and direct seed for CRP Take out strategies

- See Annual Work Plan for the Current Fiscal Year.

Washington Conservation Districts assisting Land Managers with their conservation choices

